

## DET Establishes An Enterprise Integration Competency Center

Have you ever wanted to connect one or more applications together or share data but you weren't quite sure what the best way was to go about it? Have you ever tried to use a product to do something it wasn't designed to do, but it was the only way you knew, so you tried to make it fit? Have you ever heard of the latest gadget and thought, "That's what I need!"

These are some of the issues that DET's middleware group has encountered in Enterprise Services Bus (ESB) discussions with customers and State staff. On several occasions the middleware group has been contacted about using the ESB to satisfy a need, and when the need was better understood, it sometimes turned out that another middleware tool was a better choice. Some of the customers and staff members indicated that they had talked to DET staff about their need and depending on who they talked to they were referred to at least two different people/groups for an answer. Often the answers were not the same, which created confusion.

With this pattern emerging on a fairly consistent basis, it became evident that many customers and staff members were not sure which middleware tool was best suited for their needs. It was further evident that these customers and staff members were looking for a place to get some consultation on which tool to use and that there was no single place within DET to direct these inquiries.

At the May 25<sup>th</sup> DET leadership meeting, a proposal was made and accepted to designate the DET middleware group as the Enterprise Integration Competency Center (EICC). The EICC is the place that all customers and staff should be directed for their integration needs. The EICC's role is:

- to provide direction and consultation to all agency staff (DET included) regarding the use of integration solutions
- to set direction for the use of integration solutions within the enterprise architecture
- to administer the use of integration solutions
- to advocate for and promote the use of these integration solutions

Examples of tools currently used to accomplish integration are web services (ESB), FTP and Message Orient Middleware (MOM) such as WebSphere MQ.

*It is important to note that the integration tools themselves are still installed and supported by the Bureau of Development and Operations.*

The ESB has sparked the interest of many customers and staff regarding the potential of integrating applications and data. The EICC complements this interest in two ways. First, by providing a single place where customers and staff can receive consultation services in this area, and second, by providing a source of information for the enterprise architects on how this type of integration fits into the overall architecture.

If you have questions or comments about the EICC, please contact Werner Gade via e-mail at [werner.gade@doa.state.wi.us](mailto:werner.gade@doa.state.wi.us).